

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT O 00708 281353Z

47

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 ISO-00 AGR-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-02 H-03 INR-10 INT-08 L-03 LAB-06

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 AID-20 CIEP-02 SS-20

STR-08 TAR-02 TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 FEA-02

OMB-01 SWF-02 DRC-01 /196 W
----- 123094

R 281308Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6210

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 708

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR ETRD TD XL

SUBJECT: SUGAR: GOTT VIEWS ON COMMONWEALTH SUGAR AGREEMENT

REF: POS 664

1. MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE ERROL MAHABIR TOLD ME MARCH 26 THAT TRINIDAD WILL EXPORT A SMALL PART OF ITS 1974 SUGAR CROP TO THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIGHER PRICES, EVEN THOUGH THIS WILL WORSEN TRINIDAD'S SHORT-FALL IN MEETING ITS SHARE OF THE UK QUOTA. NOTING THAT THE OTHER WEST INDIAN PRODUCERS ARE ALREADY SHIPPING SUGAR TO THE US, HE SAID THAT THE WEST INDIES AS A WHOLE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MEET THEIR UK COMMITMENT OF 725,000 LONG TONS, POSSIBLY SHIPPING AS LITTLE AS 500,000 LONG TONS.

2. COMMENTING ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS SHORTFALL, THE
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PAGE 02 PORT O 00708 281353Z

MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT THE WEST INDIES MIGHT IN THE FUTURE ASK FOR

A REDUCTION OF THEIR COMMONWEALTH SUGAR QUOTA OBLIGATION TO, SAY, 600,000 LONG TONS. HE SAID THAT OTHER COMMONWEALTH SUGAR PRODUCERS COULD EASILY MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY PROBABLY WOULD BE UNWILLING TO DO SO AT PRESENT WHEN OTHER MARKETS ARE SO MUCH MORE LUCRATIVE. MAHABIR SAID THAT SEVERE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS JUSTIFIED ACTION BY OTHER WEST INDIAN PRODUCERS TO SHIP FIRST TO THE US MARKET, BUT HE NEVERTHELESS IMPLIED SOME CRITICISM OF THESE COUNTRIES, STATING THAT BEFORE REJECTING COMMONWEALTH COMMITMENTS, THEY SHOULD HAVE CONSIDERED THAT THE UK PRICE HAD IN THE PAST ALWAYS BEEN HIGHER THAN WORLD PRICES. THE MINISTER DID NOT SEEM PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FRENCH WILL USE THE WEST INDIES SHORTFALL IN THEIR CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE QUOTAS GRANTED FOR CANE SUGAR IMPORTS.

MILLER

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